

# CHRISTIAN FORMATION IN HOME, CONGREGATION, AND COMMUNITY

Louisville Seminary: CE 316-3  
Spring Semester, 2009 (3 credit hours)  
Wednesday/Friday 10-11:20, Gardencourt, room 206

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## Course Description

This course explores home and family life in relation to educational ministries. We will engage insights from a variety of sources such as the human arts and sciences, as well as students' own experiences, as we seek wisdom through theological and biblical reflection. We will examine general contextual and cultural issues that impact home and congregational life as well as the particularities of each family and each community. Throughout the course we will be exploring ways home life intersects with a larger formational ecology for the Christian life. The hope then is to better understand homes and families in all their beauty, misery, power, and mystery.

*This course fulfills the Teaching Ministry requirement for the MDiv degree program.*

## Hopes

- Through readings, writing, and discussions students will reflect upon ways in which congregations and their leaders can encourage educational ministry with and within families. They will explore such questions as: How can churches be a resource for homes and vice versa? How does a younger generation learn the ways and practices of faith? How do families teach moral and theological concern to one another in their words, loves, hates, lifestyles, and activities? What can a teaching ministry do? What is the role of the church in advocating for caring practices in the larger community?
- Through careful attending to particular home, congregational, and community situations students will gain a depth perspective on community and human relationships and reflect upon the ways faith transforms ways of being with one another.
- Through a final project, students will integrate their reflections and attending in relation to a particular family and congregation.

## Primary Bibliography

Bass, Dorothy and Briehl, Susan (editors). *On Our Way: Christian Practices for Living a Whole Life*. Nashville: Upper Room, 2010.  
Cahill, Lisa. *Family: A Christian Social Perspective*, Fortress, 2000.  
Carlson, Paula J. and Hawkins, Peter S. (editors). *Listening For God* (volume 2). Augsburg/Fortress, 1996.

Edelman, Marian Wright. *The Sea is so Wide and My Boat is so Small: Charting a Course for the Next Generation*. New York: Hyperion, 2008.

McCall, Guadalupe Garcia. *Under the Mesquite*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2011.

Wigger, J. Bradley. *The Power of God at Home: Nurturing Our Children in Love and Grace*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 2003. (provided)

## **Requirements**

This seminar course is designed primarily around class discussions of readings, reflective exercises, students' writing, and some audio-visual materials. Accordingly, class participation and preparation are crucial. Additional guidance for weekly assignments, the "attending" exercises, a "practices" paper and the final project will be given in class. Presence and active participation in the course are assumed. In all written work, graduate level grammar, spelling, and composition are expected, including proper citation of quoted materials. Late work will be accepted only if excused before their due dates. If they are excused, the grade will be lowered at the teacher's discretion.

### *Course Engagement and Weekly assignments*

Every week students will be assigned tasks in relation to course readings, for example, designing discussion questions or writing summaries of key ideas. The goal is for each student to be in a good position to lead and participate in a discussion of the materials. These will be the rough equivalent of one page of writing (300 words).

### *Attending exercises*

The attending assignments are designed to encourage students to pay special attention to a family, a home situation, or the way a family is depicted in the culture around us (e.g. in a movie, a song, a novel a student is already reading, or on a television show). Ordinarily students will write their reflections in 1-2 pages (300-500 words). However, if you prefer, you may use another medium for expression—draw a picture, or write a poem or song for example. Or you may combine media—for example, take a picture, bring in an artifact or piece of music, and write a paragraph explaining its significance in relation to families. Use your imagination—anything that helps you see, or helps the class see, families in a deeper way.

Students are encouraged to make some connection to reading or other class material, as well as show evidence of reflection. Some examples of attending exercises you could do:

- observe a particular family in a park, restaurant, church, neighborhood, sports event etc.
- reflect on a significant moment in your own family's history (current or family of origin)—perhaps a turning point, a time of a big decision, a typical day, a special meal, a time at church, a family story, a time of change in family configuration
- reflect upon on a movie, a television or radio show, novel you are already reading, and what it reveals, assumes, or how it describes a particular home situation
- talk to someone who works regularly with families professionally—pastor, therapist, divorce lawyer, habitat for humanity worker; see what new angles on family life you can discover

- ask a child to draw their favorite Bible stories, their family, or church and tell you about it

In all, choose a variety of exercises and pay particular attention to situations that reflect themes and issues brought up in the course work.

### *Practices Report*

There will be a 5 page (1500 word) report in relation to the book *On Our Way*. More guidance will be given in class.

### *Final project*

Students will need to have a congregation with which to work (e.g., field placement, where you worship, home church, a friend's church). All students will provide a *curriculum inventory* of their congregations, with reflections regarding its educational implications, especially in relation to formation in homes and families.

Students then have a choice of projects. You are asked to choose a project least similar to anything you have done before:

- *Family Interview* (most students will do this)
- *Curriculum Design—practicing faith at home*
- *Other*. Ordinarily students will do one of the first two options, but a student may be given permission to write a traditional research paper or design a different educational program instead, at the teacher's discretion and relevant to the main themes of the course.

All projects should represent the time and effort that a 15-20 page research paper and *must integrate the readings and discussions from the whole semester*. (Note: this is what makes or breaks most final projects in relation to the grade!) A proposal for the topic and a list of potential resources (if doing a research paper) will be submitted by Research and Study Week.

### *Grading*

Engagement/Weekly assignments	30%
Attending exercises	15%
Practices report	15%
Final project	40%

### **Electronic Technology Policy**

This is a low-to-no technology course during class time. There will rarely, if ever, be a need for using laptops, tablets, phones, or any other technology that takes attention away from the classroom. A paper notebook will be sufficient. If there is an overwhelming need for use of a laptop, please request permission from the professor. You may use such technology for homework or in class when using an electronic reader.

## School Policies

### **Inclusive Language**

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. See for further assistance, [http://www.lpts.edu/Academic\\_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp](http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp).

### **Academic Honesty**

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Multiple occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For the Seminary policy, see The Code of Student Conduct, 6.11; the Student Handbook, p. 19.

### **Citation Policy**

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, based on these guides:

Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

*The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

### **Special Accommodations**

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center ([kmapes@lpts.edu](mailto:kmapes@lpts.edu)) during the first two weeks of a semester and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

### **Attendance Policy**

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Missing 1/4 of the course or more may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

### **Calendar and Assignments**

A complete calendar will be provided with the final version of the syllabus on the first day of class, September 9.

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